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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SR](#) [MW](#)

SUBJECT: MONTENEGRO FM ROCEN DISCUSSES TALLINN VISIT, KOSOVO, AND  
SOFA

REF: PODGORICA 29

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: FM ROCEN WAS QUITE PLEASED WITH HIS PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATION WITH DAS DICARLO IN TALLINN. HE REITERATED THAT, WHILE THEY SUPPORT PROGRESS, THE GOM WILL LAY LOW ON THE AHTISAARI PLAN. THE GOM IS EAGER TO SIGN A SOFA, BUT THE CEREMONY SHOULD BE SIMILAR TO PAST ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR BALKAN NEIGHBORS. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) CHARGE MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ROCEN FEBRUARY 9 AT THE MINISTERS REQUEST. ROCEN GREATLY APPRECIATED THE DISCUSSION HE HAD WITH EUR DAS DICARLO IN TALLINN. HE PARTICULARLY NOTED HER POINT THAT ALTHOUGH MILITARY ISSUES HAD BEEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT LATELY, THE U.S. WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO FURTHER PROGRESS IN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SPHERES, AS WELL AS SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF CONDITIONS TO ENCOURAGE U.S. INVESTMENT. HE WAS GLAD THE U.S. RECOGNIZED THAT THERE COULD BE NO REAL SECURITY IN EUROPE WITHOUT THE FULL INTEGRATION OF THE WESTERN BALKANS -- EVEN IF THE EUROPEANS THEMSELVES DID NOT SEE THIS. HIS DISAPPOINTMENT WAS REGARDING VISAS: "WE HAD EXPECTED THE U.S. TO ABOLISH VISAS FOR MONTENEGRO." STILL, THE DISCUSSION WAS "VERY USEFUL ALTOGETHER."

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KOSOVO  
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3. (SBU) DISCUSSING THE AHTISAARI PLAN, ROCEN REITERATED THE POINT THAT THE GOM DOES NOT WISH TO SPOIL GOOD RELATIONS WITH EITHER OF ITS NEIGHBORS, AND SO WILL TRY TO REMAIN NEUTRALLY SUPPORTIVE OF A FAIR OUTCOME IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS. HE JOKED THAT PRESIDENT VUJANOVIC'S BLAND STATEMENT (REFTEL) HAD PASSED VIRTUALLY UNNOTICED, AND THAT "UNNOTICED IS BEST." HE BELIEVES MONTENEGRO'S BEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE REGION WAS TO CONSOLIDATE STABILITY IN MONTENEGRO AS AN EXAMPLE OF MULTI-ETHNIC HARMONY. HOWEVER, THE GOM IS WILLING TO DO WORK BEHIND THE SCENES. "WHATEVER WE CAN DO, WE WILL."

4. (SBU) PUTTING SERBIA'S POLITICIANS ON THE COUCH, HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE "IRRATIONAL" PART OF THE SERBIAN MINDSET. THEY CAN NEVER SAY THEY ACCEPT KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE, ALTHOUGH THEY ALL KNOW IT WAS DECIDED LONG AGO. THEY ARE ALL THINKING ABOUT A POST-KOSOVO FUTURE, WISHING THEY COULD "HIBERNATE" THROUGH THE PROCESS; AVOIDING BEING TAGGED AS THE "NEW VUK BRANKOVIC" (THE TRAITOROUS VILLAIN IN THE 1389 DEFEAT AT KOSOVO POLJE) IS MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM THAN MOVING SERBIA INTO THE FUTURE. ROCENS ANALYSIS IS THAT, CONTRARY TO POPULAR PERCEPTION, WHOEVER HAS THE POLITICAL COURAGE TO EXPLAIN THE FACTS TO THE SERBIAN PUBLIC WILL EARN THEIR RESPECT AND ASSURE HIMSELF OF A POLITICAL FUTURE.



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SOFA  
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15. (SBU) THE GOM HAS SET UP AN INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP FOR INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS SUCH AS THE SOFA (HEADED BY HIS DEPUTY DRAGANA RADULOVIC), AND IS SEEKING PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL FOR A NEW DEPARTMENT FOR EU AND NATO COOPERATION WITHIN THE MFA. THE GOM IS EAGER TO SIGN A SOFA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, ROCEN WAS CLEAR THAT THE MODALITIES OF THE SIGNING CEREMONY SHOULD BE THE SAME AS THEY WERE FOR SERBIA AND BIH. BOTH OF THOSE AGREEMENTS, HE SAID, WERE SIGNED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT. A SIGNING AT ANOTHER VENUE, SUCH AS THE PENTAGON WOULD NOT BE AN ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE. "MONTENEGRO SHOULD NOT BE TREATED AS A SECOND-CLASS COUNTRY," HE SAID. SOFTENING HIS TONE, HE THEN SMILED AND SHRUGGED, "IM NOT ASKING FOR MUCH."

COMMENT: POST WILL FOLLOW UP MONDAY TO SCHEDULE A FIRST REVIEW OF A DRAFT SOFA TEXT. ROCEN'S EMPHATIC INSISTENCE ON A CEREMONY EQUIVALENT TO THAT ACCORDED THE SIGNING OF SOFAS WITH SERBIA AND BIH, SUGGESTS THAT EVEN IF AGREEMENT IS RAPIDLY REACHED ON MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TEXT, SIGNING COULD WELL BE HELD UP BY MONTENEGRIN FIXATION ON THE OPTICS OF THE CEREMONY. END COMMENT.

BARNES